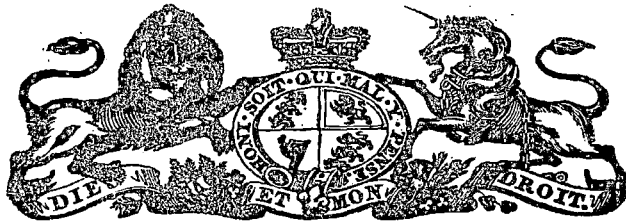


(No. 104.)



1883.

T A S M A N I A.

H O U S E O F A S S E M B L Y.

**BISCHOFF ROAD TO THE NORTH-WEST
COAST :**

**PETITIONS FROM RESIDENTS OF LAUNCESTON, EAST
AND WEST DEVON.**

Return to an Order of the House of Assembly. (Mr. Braddon.)

Laid upon the Table by the Minister of Lands, August 23, 1883; and ordered by
the House to be printed, August 29, 1883.



To His Excellency SIR G. C. STRAHAN, K.C.M.G., &c., Governor of
Tasmania, in Council.

The Petition of the undersigned Residents of Launceston, East and West Devon.

RESPECTFULLY SHOWETH :

THAT the desirableness of opening up communication between Bischoff and the N.W. Coast by means of a public road has long been recognised : that the necessity of such a road was pointed out by the Select Committee of 1882 (Rouse's Camp to Wynyard, Parliamentary Paper No. 119), and has since grown in urgency with the progress of settlement and further development of the mineral resources of Bischoff and the West Coast.

That all the independent evidence of those acquainted with the locality, and the incontrovertible evidence of every day facts, point to the conclusion that the only road between Waratah and the N.W. Coast which can possibly attract sufficient traffic to justify its construction out of public money is one which shall have for its junction with the Coast road a point eastward of the Emu Bay Tramway terminus.

That while it is admitted that the carriage of ore from Bischoff coastwards must continue in the hands of the Tramway Co. (though at reduced rates of freight), it is obvious that as to the bulk of the passenger and light goods traffic (which comes from the east) a road from the Penguin would successfully compete with the Tramway, inasmuch as there would be from the Penguin direct to Waratah 44 miles of road against 12 miles of road and 48½ of Tramway from Penguin *via* Emu Bay ; or 32 miles of road against 48½ of tramway ; which 32 miles could be travelled by coach in considerably less time than, and at about half the cost of, the Tramway journey.

That the passenger traffic from the east to Bischoff is steadily increasing. Three coaches now ply daily both ways between Deloraine and Emu Bay, and for the greater part of the year are crowded. Passengers also travel by the s.s. Devon between Launceston on the one hand and Emu Bay or the Leven on the other ; and the current of light goods traffic flows to and fro in the same channel.

That while a road from the Leven or Penguin would catch the greater part of the traffic, it would also be largely availed of by farmers for carting agricultural and dairy produce and driving cattle and sheep to Waratah ; so giving to the districts of East and West Devon an additional market for their produce and the stock which they are now fattening in very large numbers.

That these districts (comprising the Municipal District of Port Sorell) are situated eastward of Emu Bay, and that consideration may be claimed for Port Sorell in this matter if only because of its prominent position in the agricultural statistics of the Colony.

That of the road from the Penguin to Rouse's Camp (41 miles), 6½ miles will be immediately completed, while 7 miles more must in any case be constructed to open up first-class Crown land to agricultural settlement, and give an outlet to settlers who have already selected land on the Pine Road ; and that therefore only 27½ miles would have to be specially constructed for the purpose. Further, that as 31 miles of the Penguin and Waratah route are common to both the Penguin and Leven lines of road, the construction of the road from the Penguin would have only 10 miles of road to link in the Leven with Waratah, whereby Waratah would be brought into communication with two agricultural centres and two ports, of which one (the Leven) is already a port of call of the s.s. Devon, and admittedly the second harbour of the N.W. Coast.

That the construction of the 27½ miles above referred to would involve only a very moderate expenditure, the grades and general character of the country traversed being eminently favourable to economical road making ; while the road, when completed, could at any time be converted into a light railway line connecting Bischoff with Formby, the Penguin route offering the greatest advantages and facilities for such extension.

That the fact of the Penguin route passing through 17 miles of the V.D.L. Co.'s property should not present any obstacle to this national work. Settlement upon that property would be of lasting benefit to

the Colony, and saving the inconsiderable amount of purchase money given for land, as profitable to the State as settlement upon Crown lands, nor should it be overlooked that in some form or other the State has already received the price of the V.D.L. Co.'s land.

That the compensation to be paid to the V.D.L. Co. for land taken up for this road cannot assume very large proportions. The "Lands Clauses Act" allows compensation only for severance (not for any loss real or imaginary sustained through competition of a public road), and against the loss by severance would have to be set off any possible gain by settlement resulting from the road. The Manager of the V.D.L. Co. has, in his evidence before the Select Committee above referred to, stated plainly that a road through the V.D.L. Co.'s property must improve it by attracting settlement.

That the conclusion arrived at by the Select Committee of 1882, notwithstanding the final resolution in favour of the Wynyard route (as to which the Committee were divided) confirms the views of your Petitioners. It is admitted there—

- 1—That the Penguin route has slight advantages as to gradients and cost of construction.
- 2—That the Penguin route would be the best for passengers and light traffic.
- 3—That the cost of carriage of heavy goods between Waratah and the coast either at the Penguin or Wynyard would be about the same.

And when it is remembered these are admissions made by a majority strongly predisposed in favour of the Wynyard route, not arguments adduced by advocates of the rival line of road, the claims of the Penguin route should be deemed strong indeed.

Your Petitioners would therefore respectfully ask that the Penguin Road to Rouse's Camp may form an item of the Public Works Scheme of 1883.

And your Petitioners will ever pray, &c.

Here follow Signatures on similar Petitions from—

Launceston,
Waratah,
North West Coast,
Latrobe,
Don,
Penguin, and
Hamilton-on-Forth.